



MEETING MINUTES / 21 MAY 2019

ATTENDANCE:

Present: Stewart, Baldwin, Farley, Johnson, Lardizzzone, Lopez, Magner, McMullen, Sarg, Seppala
66%

Excused: Showell, Armbruster, Bradley, Newman, Newstadt

Unexcused:

Guests: Brendan Mackie (Wilmington VAMC), Jessica Finan (Home of the Brave), Pat Cerchio (First State Military Women Warriors), Liz Byers-Jiron (Veterans Awareness Center), Dave Skocik (Veterans Coalition), Kim McMullen, Mitch Gauge, John Pastor, Jeffrey Warrick, Tiffani Taylor (PAM Rehabilitation), George DelFarno (PAM Rehabilitation), Nick Callazzo (Vet Fest), Mitchell Gauge

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS (Meeting lead by Vice Chair Stewart:

Moment of silence for service members (home and abroad), first responders, and fire fighters

Thanked Commissioners for supporting events

MEETING MINUTES:

Lardizzzone, seconded by Lopez, approved

ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:

Wilmington VAMC – Brendan Mackie, Public Affairs Officer

Press release on Dover CBOC

- Open summer 2020 in Blue Hen Mall
- 29K square feet (tripling in size)
- Not in space where mold concerns were voiced
- New space

Wilmington VA Police, three officers recognized as VA officers of the year

Mission Act starts on 6 June

- Community referrals are worked through primary care provider
- Addresses and contact information must be updated
- Flyers given to DCVA front office

(Sarg) What's the mileage restriction?

Differs by specialties and services, information can be found in upcoming pamphlet

Certain civilian urgent care facilities will be predetermined to accept VA patients

Mission Act has various elements that will have to be publicized and marketed for understanding

VA employees are receiving act training

(Baldwin) Is there a TED talk to explain the Mission Act?

The video is in the works

(Lopez) Have you spoken with University of Delaware's Mobility in Motion Action Team regarding Mission Act transportation?

Has not spoken with them but would like their contact information

VA projects by 2022 New Castle veteran population will shrink but Kent and Sussex will expand

Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Terry Hollinger, Director:

Not present

Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:

14 males, one opening

Female facility has five beds available

Male with children can stay on campus

(Sarg) Are any children at the facility?

No

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Nick Collazo, Vet Fest

Vet Fest is a celebration of veterans

- Saturday, 28 September / 0800 – 1500

- Focus on preventing veterans' suicide

- Features traveling exhibit, Remembering Our Fallen, hosted by Chase Bank, provides memorial of fallen service members

Public conversations about suicide prevention, traumatic brain injury, and post-traumatic stress interventions

Mitchell Gauge, Foam Exposure

Discussed pluroflournated chemicals

- Associated with form used to put out JP fuel fires

- Chemicals may be present at Delaware Air National Guard and Dover Air Force Base site

- Contamination or exposure may impact service members / veterans

- Request that service organizations bring this to their members and legislator's attention

- Provided handouts documenting concerns

Liz Byers-Jiron, Delaware Stand Down

Stand Down scheduled for 20 September

- Assists all veterans, not just homeless, through resources

- Looking to emphasized suicide prevention

- Sponsors and volunteers are needed

- Handouts were provided

- Next meeting 23 May / 1300 at DCVA

Dave Skocik, Delaware Veterans Coalition

Discussed the importance of communicating veterans issues and information

- Through formats like Veterans Summit and VA Town Halls

- Interested in getting organization links to add to coalition's website

Mentioned VVA Memorial Day Ceremony on 27 May / 1400

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Armbruster:

Interments – 72 (-3)

Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:

Interments – 39 (+15)

Health and Human Services, Commissioner Sarg:

Provided letter and discussed medical and dental costs sharing at the Delaware Veterans Home

- VA should cover pharmacy costs regardless of service connection percentage

- VA should cover some dental cost for veterans who do not meet 100% service connected status
- VA should provide assistance and/or cost sharing for proposed veterans' home dental treatment
 - Residential care is not just once a week, it's ongoing
 - Can care be established for veterans in the community?
- Dental clinic's operating hours, category of patients, fee scales, staff need to be determined
- Still soliciting funds and grants to supplement building costs
- Some dental diseases can lead to negative health conditions

Brain Injury Council – Delaware

- Promoted brain injury trust fund, six applications are pending
 - Fund receives \$50K annually, unused funds carryover

Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen:

Thanked team for presenting DCVA recommendations before the Joint Veterans Affairs Committee

Presented handout of current house and senate legislation pertaining to veterans

Urged commissioners to speak to legislators about recommendations

(Baldwin) Expressed concern that the HB for exempting 100% service connect veterans from property tax payments will not be presented. Follow-up by stating this would be a slight against veterans

Round robin discussion on exempting state income tax on military retired pensions, which would be an incentive for retirees to come to Delaware. It would also help fill vacant blue collar positions with veterans

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

DVTF Previous Month: Applications 10; Granted 7 (70%); Awarded \$7,021.49; Balance - \$47,011.00

Urged service organizations to speak to General Assembly members to gain more traction on veteran legislation

- 12 veteran service organizations are associated with DCVA

Mentioned the Behavioral Health Consortium, Suicide Prevention Committee, and Mental Health Association in Delaware as avenues to join and assist with veterans' suicide awareness/prevention

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:

Commissioner McMullen (Air Force Sergeants Association - AFSA)

Chapter Information:

Membership tables are scheduled for dining facility, commissary, and newcomers' briefing

Presented AFSA awards to Smyrna and Caesar Rodney JROTCs and at leadership school graduation

16 May: Successful fundraiser at McGlynn's Pub

Planning Golf Tournament and 5K event

Continuing Veterans Home volunteers for bingo and other events

Commissioner Information:

15 May: Participated in executive committee meeting

16 May: Participated in McGlynn's fundraiser

24 – 29 Aug: International Professional Airman's Conference, San Antonio, Texas

Commissioner Armbruster (American Legion - AL)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Bradley (American Veterans - AmVets)

13 Apr: Auxiliary Easter Egg Hunt was hugely successful

16 – 20 May: Various members assisted with traveling Vietnam Wall display in Lewes

22 May: Cape Henlopen JROTC is hosting Memorial Day Ceremony

- AmVets officers will attend

15 Jun: Departmental Convention held at Post 2, attended by National Commander's Assistant

Commissioner Lardizzone (Disabled American Veterans - DAV)

16 – 19 Apr: Mobile Service Officers filed 59 claims at various locations
- Final use in October after that service officers will go to facilities to brief and file claims
- Seeking facilities throughout the state to perform these actions
19 Apr: Attended Senator Carper's Veterans Summit
25 Apr: Attended Friends of Veterans Home meeting
26 Apr: Attended Bill Peterson's retirement dinner
30 Apr: Participated in Delaware Veterans Home admissions' meeting
2 May: Attended Governor's Prayer Breakfast
2 – 5 May: Attended Connecticut DAV Convention
6 May: Attended Delaware Veterans Home bell dedication
14 May: Attended Wilmington VA VSO meeting
17 May: Attended Modern Maturity Center's veterans engagement meeting
17 – 19 May: Attended Departmental Convention

Commissioner Johnson (Korean War Veterans Association - KWVA)

Scholarships, \$1000.00, will be awarded to Sussex Tech, Sussex Central, and Cape Henlopen
Donated \$3K to Wreaths Across America to take advantage of additional wreath special
Chapter 2 continues to raise fund through Rose of Sharon at different stores
Wounded Heroes Hunting Group invited WWII or Korean War veterans to a 1 Jun fishing event
Chapter will assist with a Rehoboth Beach Flag Day Ceremony, folding the flag and providing the fold's meaning
- Fundraising event through SoDel Restaurant
Attended Senator Carper's Veterans Summit
Attended Bill Peterson's retirement dinner

Commissioner Farley (Marine Corps League - MCL)

Department presented two \$1000.00 scholarships to First State Military Academy seniors
11 May: Department convention was held at Heritage Shores, Bridgeville
- New Commandant Frank Mathers / Deputy Judge Advocate Bill Farley
Delaware Veterans Homelessness Status Report was emailed to commissioners
- Chart shows veterans by county
Attended veterans' home bell ceremony

Commissioner Sarg (Military Officers Association of America - MOAA)

17 Apr: Attended Joint Veterans Affairs Committee meeting
25 Apr: Attended Friends of the Delaware Veterans Home meeting
26 Apr: Attended Bill Peterson's retirement dinner
29 Apr: Attended Senator Carper's Veterans Summit
29 Apr: Attended University of Delaware and Wilmington VA function
30 Apr: Attended Delaware Veterans Home Admissions meeting
2 May: Attended Governor's Prayer Breakfast
6 May: Attended Delaware Veterans Home bell dedication
6 May: Attended Brain Injury Fund and Council meeting
8 May: Attended Wilmington VA Town Hall
8 May: Attended HB 132 presentation to House Veterans Affairs Committee
16 May: Attended Delaware Joining Forces meeting
18 May: Hosted MOAA Scholarship Banquet, granted \$7500.00 in scholarships to Kent County JROTC cadets
Presented five leadership medals to Kent County JROTC cadets and 40 sets of gold bars to graduating University of Delaware cadets

Commissioner Magner (Military Order of the Purple Heart - MOPH)

29 Apr: Attended Senator Carper's Veterans Summit

3 May: Participated in Wilmington VA Patient Carnival

Presented Purple Heart Leadership Medals to various ROTC and SROTC schools

- 17 April – Delaware Military Academy

- 17 April – Glasgow High School

- 18 April – William Penn High School

- 1 May – First State Military Academy

- 2 May – Smyrna High School

- 9 May – Christiana High School

- 17 May – University of Delaware

- 24 May Appoquinimink High School

25 May / 1100: Departmental Convention at Mission BBQ, Dover

- Commander Gary "MO" Morris will be sworn in as 2019 – 20 commander

14 Jun: Hosting Millsboro Cemetery Flag Day Ceremony

Commissioner Newman (Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Baldwin (Vietnam Veterans of America – VVA)

9 May: Addressed Dover Rotary Club, discussed military and educational leadership

17 May: Keynote speaker DELMARVA Boy Scout Council's God and Country breakfast

Attended MOAA Naval JROTC awards ceremony

Pursuing Sussex County JROTC Academy

28 – 30 May: Attending Washington DC and Norfolk Memorial Day Ceremonies

31 May: Doing first salute ceremony at the University of Delaware for students becoming officers in the U.S. Army

18 Jun: Depart for London/Normandy/Italy D Day tour

Meeting resistance with Sussex County military high school proposal

Commissioner Showell (At Large, affiliated with Delaware National Guard)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Newstadt (At Large, affiliated with Jewish War Veterans)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Seppala (At Large, affiliated with Military Order of World Wars)

MOWW is celebrating its 100th anniversary

29 Apr: Attended Senator Carper's Veterans Summit

Delaware Military Museum (at old DNG headquarters building)

- Open weekly from 1000 – 1300

- Separate room for each military conflict (Revolutionary – Afghanistan)

- Emphasizes Delaware's participation and contribution to those conflicts

- Speaker every second Saturday from 1300 – 1400

- - Next talk 8 June, Bob Austin, topic My Life as a Marine during WW II

Commissioner Lopez (At Large, affiliated with Delaware Veterans)

16 Apr: Conducted briefing with Transition Management Team for multiple agencies

25 Apr: Chaired Veterans Stand Down meeting

25 Apr: Met with DelVets leadership to discuss various topics/events

26 Apr: Attended Bill Peterson's retirement

29 Apr: Attended University of Delaware and Wilmington VA partnership briefing

1 May: DelVets Post 2 members presented six \$1000.00 scholarships to local students

- Had over 30 applicants

2 May: Attended Governor's Prayer Breakfast

4 May: Attended Xfinity NASCAR race/tour as part of DCVA group

6 May: Attended Delaware Veterans Home bell dedication

8 May: Attended Wilmington VA Town Hall in Dover

18 May: Attended Convoy of Hope Committee meeting, serves as veteran services lead

18 May: Attended DAV banquet dinner

23 May / 1500: Meeting at DelVets Post 2 if interested in placing flags on veterans graves

25 May / 1030: DelVets Post 1 Memorial Day Ceremony followed by picnic 1200 – 1600

26 May / 0800: Meeting at DelVets Post 1 for Memorial Day grave visitation

27 May / 1100: American Legion Post 2 and DelVets Post 2 Memorial Day Ceremony at the Dover Triangle

14 Jun / 1800: Dover Elks Lodge Flag Day Ceremony, picnic, and entertainment

Commissioner Stewart (At Large, affiliated with student veterans associations)

Nothing to report

TERM COMPLETION:

EVENTS:

21 May / 1500: Wilmington VA Town Hall, 2535 Veterans Drive (DelVets Post 1), Wilmington

24 May / 1300: World War II Veterans Recognition, Brandywine State Park, Wilmington

25 May / 1030: Memorial Day Recognition, Bear Veterans Cemetery, Bear

27 May / 1400: VVA Memorial Day Recognition, Veterans Memorial Park, Dover

29 May / 1830: Our Community Salutes (Enlistee Recognition), Cavaliers Country Club, Bear

30 May / 1030: Memorial Day Recognition, War Memorial Park, New Castle

14 Jun / 1000: Flag Day Ceremony, Millsboro Veterans Cemetery, Millsboro

13 Jul / 1000: Convoy of Hope, Legislative Green, Dover

18 Jul / 0830: DJF Meeting, Adams Service Center, Georgetown

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

Proposed future meeting at DelVets Post 1 on 20 August / 1700

- Will formally present for vote during June meeting

Selection of Election Committee Chairperson

- Doing off-years for Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

- - Provides leadership continuity

- - Via vote, decided to elect Vice Chairperson in June

- Election Committee Chair

- Needed to oversee Vice Chairperson voting

- Farley is chair with assistance from Lardizzone

- Commissioners interested in the position will email Farley

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:

CLOSED SESSION:

NEXT MEETING:

LOCATION:

Tuesday, 18 June 2019 at 10:00 AM

Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs